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Energy Department Will Enforce 13 SEER Air Conditioner Standard

WASHINGTON, DC – The Department of Energy (DOE) announced today that it will enforce a 13 seasonal energy efficiency rating or “SEER” standard for residential central air conditioners. This standard, which will apply to central air conditioners starting in January 2006, increases by 30 percent the SEER standard that applies to models sold today.

“At this point, all parties have had their day in court,” Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy David Garman said. “DOE will enforce the 13 SEER standard. In the interest of giving consumers and industry the regulatory certainty they need, it is time for the government and for private parties to stop litigating, and start working towards complying with the 13 SEER standard.”

The Energy Department had promulgated a 12 SEER standard in 2002, but earlier this year, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit ruled that the department had done so improperly. The air conditioner manufacturing industry had challenged the 13 SEER, which DOE had issued in January 2001, but recently withdrew its challenge.

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